

# DESMO LEANINGS



The Official Magazine of the Ducati Owners Club of the United States

Volume 6 Issue 2

Summer 2008



***Ducks Along The Blue Ridge Report  
Benelli Tornado Road Test • Tech Talk: Plastic Welding  
Hunt For My First Bike • Charlotte Classic Bike Show***


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#### About the Cover:

Cover photo taken somewhere along the Blue Ridge Parkway (NC) on the return from the "Ducks Along the Blue Ridge" rally, May 2008. Models are (wife) Jill Wyse and (mistress) '98 Moto Guzzi V10 Centauro (you figure out who's who).

Cover photo by Terry Wyse

## Greetings from il Capo

Many times when I sit down to write "notes from il Capo," I do not look forward to it because trying to find something to say is not always easy. Well, I can tell you this time is different, and I am excited just to be home to write it. My hospital stay lasted only three weeks, and the time I had to spend in Chapel Hill was just short of four weeks total. I am happy to be out and even happier to be alive.

While I was gone, the club held two events, and many club members rose to the occasion to help make them as seamless as ever. A big thank you goes out to Craig Hunley, Clyde Romero, Bill Birchfield, Bob Lattanzi and Jesse Perkins for taking on lots of the duties and soliciting help when needed to run Ducks Along the Blue Ridge. They even arranged to have the rain almost pass us by, so they did a spectacular job. The details of the event are covered in the finely crafted article by Terry Wyse.

The May 19 track day also went off without a hitch, and again a big thank you goes out to Joyce and Rick Tannenbaum, Hugh Williams, Bill Birchfield, Larry Haber, Clyde Romero, and Jay Lucas. Again, I cannot tell them and any others who helped out how much this means to me. US DESMO has been one of those projects that has taken on a life of its own. The club was started with modest goals and has grown to be a large part of my life. I really miss being there, but it is a great comfort to have all this assistance. If I have forgotten to mention you and you helped, I apologize, and I am still very grateful.

Now I am looking forward to the day my platelet count gets high enough I can ride. I intend to make the Erwin, Tennessee rally on August 8-10. I just hope I can bring my bike. We have only a few riders signed up, so look to include this event on your summer calendar. My big goal is to ride my Monster to the MotoGP at Indy in September. This is the first MotoGP that has been close enough for me to consider it. Vicki Smith of Ducati dot net fame has put together a wonderful package, including a Mugello-style grandstand with the famous red-and-white poster boards to spell out important things like "Ducati" and "Stoner." Do not miss this event.

Gas prices are high and will make us all consider what events and vacations we can take. Just think: our bikes get great gas mileage, so what better excuse do you need to make a club event?

Come ride with us.

Jim



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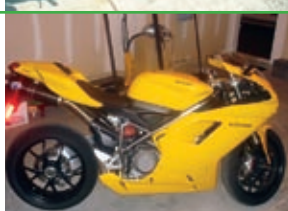


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(continued on page 27...)

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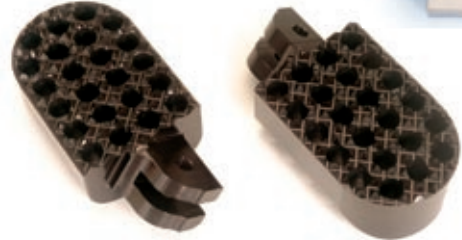


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# Ducks Along the Blue Ridge 2008

by Terry Wyse, Member #00992; photos by Terry Wyse; R. C. Cole, Member #00061; and Jim Calandro, Member #00001

**W**ell, if it's springtime in North Carolina, it must be time for Ducks Along the Blue Ridge! As has been the custom, the rally was held in beautiful Mount Airy, North Carolina (aka Mayberry).

This rally was special for me personally since it marked my "return" to the DABR rally after quite a number of years of not attending. I was also able to talk my wife into accompanying me on this trip. Since I would end up probably the lone Moto Guzzi Centauro, I figured I would need the extra protection from all the rabid Ducatisti that populate this event. Turns out, I was

fact I might cry if I receive any negative criticism, let's just say that ALL Italian bikes are beautiful both visually and aurally. I think we can all agree that there's nothing like the sound of a proper 90-degree Vee in the key of two cylinders, right? Right!

Speaking of Italian motorcycles, there was also good representation from Aprilia and even Bimota. (When have you ever seen TWO Bimotas at a small gathering like this?) Myself, I just enjoyed walking down the line of the Quality Inn parking-lot showroom and drooling over a few of the newer bikes like the 1098, 848, and Hypermotard. And what is it about the older 916/996 and 851/888 Superbikes that makes me all weak in the knees? With so many nice Ducats, I guess I'm "lucky" to have a Moto Guzzi, since I don't think I could settle on a single Ducati as THE one to own. I think I'd have to have at least an 851 Superbike, Hypermotard, 916, Multistrada,



Another Classic Italian twin

not only the lone Centauro that weekend, but the only Moto Guzzi, period! Now, this is where I would normally insert a few notes about the beautiful flowing lines of the Centauro followed by a lesson in proper V-twin engine orientation, but, given the intended audience and the



and 848 (perfect track bike?) in the garage. Damn, and then there's that Bimota DB3 Mantra of Billy Birchfield that keeps jerking my head around... but I digress.

Soon after my wife and I arrived at the hotel and got settled in after enduring the 2+ hour drone up I-77, we registered and enjoyed the "traditional" start of the rally,

which is decent local-delivery pizza and catching up with old friends and some new ones. In Jim's absence, Craig Hunley, Bob Lattanzi, Clyde Romero, and friends dealt with registration duties and did a bang-up job. Soon after



Jesse Perkins, Bob Lattanzi and Craig Hunley handling registration duties.

the pizza was devoured, conversation drifted outdoors to the parking lot and the telling of Tall Tales. Right Reverend Romero had a small congregation of "Choir Boys" and delivered an exceptional sermon (or sermons!) to those in attendance. Rumors of a small offering being taken up to adorn the Cathedral of Ducati in Carbon Fiber were unfounded as it turns out. My wife appears to be a Ducati Agnostic as she turned in early just as the sermons started to ramp up, with the Spirit (spirits?) flowing freely.



Right Reverend Romero preaches to the Ducati Faithful

Enough Talk, Let's Ride!

Saturday morning broke clear, crisp, and a tad cool with no hint of rain as of yet, so it was time to grab a quick breakfast and hit some of the better twisties of North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. I lost count of how many times we went in/out of North Carolina and Virginia as we skirted along the borders of these two states. Our group took the prescribed escape route out of Mount Airy called Piper's Gap Road, which takes you north to the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP). Piper's Gap is one of those nice "appetizer" roads that get you pumped up for what's about to come for the next few hours. Taking the BRP south for a few miles, we mostly ignored the

ridiculously slow posted 45 mph speed limit (watch out for the Federales!) and jumped off the Parkway at Route 18 west and followed that into Sparta, North Carolina.

At this point, the original route takes you southwest on 18 to Laurel Springs, where you pick up Route 88 which takes you all the way to US 421, which you take north and on into Mountain City, Tennessee, for lunch. Well, our group didn't exactly take the prescribed route, but instead effectively swapped the morning/afternoon routes. This was sort of per my request to our group leader and Route Meister Craig Hunley. Seems in the past the afternoon ride, consisting of a long stretch of very



twisty US 58, has, how shall we say, caused more than its fair of "missteps," resulting in a trail of carbon fiber and billet aluminum bits. My own theory is that, after a nice big lunch, rider's physical and mental responses might be a tad sluggish and not up to focusing undivided attention on this rather long stretch of curves on US 58. Whatever the case, I preferred to run this extended section first and take the less demanding route in the afternoon so as not to disturb my after-lunch nap time. So we ran the route sheet mostly backwards. (You have NO IDEA how difficult it is to ride a motorcycle backwards for 3 hours, especially with a passenger blocking the view!)

After a wonderful morning ride of remarkably clean roads for this time of year, we rolled into Mountain City ready for lunch. We pulled up to Cook's Buffet only to find out that the restaurant appears to be out of business. We continued on through town and stumbled upon a decent



little Japanese fast-food restaurant. After fueling up both our bodies and our bikes, we proceeded to run the rest of our "backwards" route. Route Meister Craig and Bill



Birchfield knew of a nice little Spanish restaurant near Sparta that doubled as a coffee shop, so that's where we made our last stop before heading back to Mayberry. It was at this point that finally the skies opened up a bit and the predicted rain began to fall. This was around 3 p.m., which was probably a couple of hours earlier than the rain was predicted to hit. Nonetheless, we simply took our time finishing our coffee klatch and waited for the rain to subside. We'd already used up the best of the twisties for the day so we simply had a leisurely, if a bit "moist," ride back to the hotel. The only downside was that it scuttled plans for an extension to our ride on some choice roads north of Mount Airy in Virginia, roads with names like "Route 40" and "Squirrel Run."

As great as the riding was (and it WAS great), it was not without incident. We had two fellow riders go down very early in the day and needed to be hospitalized. As of this writing, these gentlemen are recovering nicely. And what multi-motorcycle weekend in Mayberry country wouldn't be complete without a few invitations to court (RSVP please!)



by the local Barney Fifes and Andys? I believe the ticket count was seven, but everybody who received one seemed genuinely cheerful about the ordeal as they were grinning ear-to-ear when this was mentioned at the awards ceremony that evening. There was even one Canadian that was facing possible extradition! Now, if that were true, it would make a heckuva story. Perhaps Reverend





Romero could weave that into next year's sermon!

As great a day as Saturday was, it wouldn't be complete without club president and "Il Capo" Jim Calandro being part of the weekend. So it was with great anticipation that Jim showed up at the rally that afternoon with wife Ann, son Tony, and daughter Jody in tow. I for one just stood back and watched Jim work his "magic" with the Ducati Faithful. It wasn't long after he arrived that he had a small crowd gathered 'round, and it remained this way until Jim had to leave later that evening. For me, DABR was made complete with Jim's presence that evening. 'Nuf said.

I'll sign off with what I thought was the "line of the weekend." During the customary Saturday evening prize raffle, one of the attendees who happened to collect one of the court invitations that day blurted out, "I didn't get my (raffle) ticket!" To which emcee Clyde Romero responded, "You already GOT your ticket for the weekend!" Laughter ensued.



The author and wife Jill preparing to head home.

Jim Calandro/US DESMO would like to thank the following sponsors for donating prizes for the Saturday evening raffle:

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- Cycle Gear of Birmingham*
- Hurricane Motorcycles*
- Mark Thorogood, good Canadian maple syrup.*

**About the author:**

Terry Wyse lives near Waxhaw, North Carolina, and even though he owns a lovely Moto Guzzi Centauro, he has NO PROBLEM AT ALL riding with those of the Ducati persuasion. In fact, some of the nicest people he knows on two wheels happen to ride "that other Italian motorcycle." Terry would also like to thank his wife Jill for being such a good sport and going along with him for DABR and enduring 650 total road miles and UNTOLD miles of non-stop motorcycle talk that weekend. Me thinks she looked forward to getting back on the "Guzzinator" just to get away from all the motorcycle chat!



# Tornado Sweeps Thru New England

**150mph Speeds Recorded... No Injuries Reported**

*EXCLUSIVE TO DESMO LEANINGS: On the Test Ride with John M. Rossi, Founder VivaDUCATI.com, USDESMO Northeast Representative, Member #00262*

The Benelli Tornado Naked Tre (TNT) 1130 has thoroughly reinvigorated my passion and curiosity in the broad variety of motorcycle design. As if I needed a boost.

This motorcycle reinforces what has been long-known—that Italian design continually pushes the boundaries with confidence and unapologetic conviction. For that reason alone, the Benelli TNT deserves respect and a close up, in person visit to fully appreciate.

A source of inspiration for most, often imitated but never matched, Italian design such as the Benelli TNT 1130 delivers unparalleled flair and engineering performance, all offered by one of Italy's oldest marques—founded in 1911. It is not surprising that the Benelli lineup is in good company with the finest Italian marques offered by Steve Keegan at Eastern Cycle in Beverley, Massachusetts, including Ducati, Moto Guzzi, and MV Agusta. While Steve and I were discussing our upcoming

Ducati Track Bike project (look for the multi-part article in the Motorcyclist's Post and on-line at VivaDUCATI.com), I was thoroughly distracted by the look of the Benelli TNT.

Starting with the unconventional front profile, this machine is shockingly different at first glance and for some it may border on bizarre



in its zoomorphic, insect-like face—or transformer-toy look and stature. The machine just looks ready to morph into something other than the beautiful, brute of the motorcycle that it is. Regardless of the first impression, the Benelli TNT, like many newly defined boundaries encompassed in works of art, deserves a serious long look, and, of course, a ride, to appreciate the entire package. It is an aggressive design statement and a very capable motorcycle.

While many bikes are rightly or wrongly judged by the stylistic expressions of their slipstream shape and bodywork, the Benelli TNT is naked. This elevates the design equation considerably given the fact that you cannot simply resolve the bike's look with a veneer body panel, paint scheme, or aesthetic graphic. The Benelli TNT demanded a seamless integration of engineering and aesthetic that is functional, fully exposed, and sculptural. In total, it all works exquisitely as what many would qualify as a near-exotic Italian motorcycle. Believe me, you will be one of a handful who own one of these machines.

After an enjoyable ride on the Benelli from Beverley to Boston, I loaded the bike for New Hampshire Motor Speedway, as I instruct at the Penguin Road Race School. I promised Steve Keegan that I would not “thrash it,” and honestly I only did about 12-laps before good judgment put me back on my own Ducati track bike. I then focused the TNT test on the road. The track ride on the TNT was well under control and conservative, but all the raw ingredients were there with this bike: power, torque, precision handling, and a firm suspension ideal for the track—perhaps too stiff for 165 pounds on the street.

Rolling the bike onto the NASCAR scale in the tech-garage, it weighed in at 444 pounds full of fuel, not bad for a 1030cc street-oriented naked machine. Next was a visit to see Rob Swartz of Rob's Dyno ([www.RobsDyno.com](http://www.RobsDyno.com)). Now Rob knows a wide range of motorcycles and



machines, from diesel fleets of FedEx to in-line fours, V-twins, and Ducati race bikes. He can fine-tune the best running machines for more performance and power, which is the whole reason he is based at New Hampshire Motor Speedway on most LRRS race weekends. His mobile dyno can also be scheduled to roll into your backyard, as he covers most of New England and works with many shops, individuals, and builders. We strapped the Benelli TNT onto the dyno and ran it up to a

**Specifications:**  
**Benelli Tornado Naked Tre 1130**

**Engine:** 4-stroke, 3 cylinders in-line, tilted forwards 15°, fitted with anti-vibration countershaft, chain-driven, double overhead camshafts with 4 valves per cylinder

**Bore x stroke:** 88 x 62mm

**Engine Displacement:** 1130cc

**Compression ratio:** 11.5:1

**Cooling system:** Liquid, with lateral double radiator served by two electric fans, oil cooling system with radiator

**Lubrication:** Wet sump

**Max power/rpm:** 101 kW at 9250 rpm

**Max torque/rpm:** 117 Nm at 6750 rpm

**Carburetion:** Electronic injection with 1 injector per cylinder

**Ignition:** Single coil inductive discharge electronic ignition

**Clutch:** Wet clutch

**Gearbox:** 6-speed extractable

**Transmission:** Straight-toothed primary gear, chain-driven secondary

**Frame:** Mixed solution. Front: ASD steel-tube trellis fastened with screws to boxed rear section, aluminum alloy castings. Sub frame: aluminum die-cast

**Suspension:** Front: Marzocchi 50mm diameter “upside down” fork. Rear: ASD steel-tube trellis swingarm with Extreme Technology single shock absorber with adjustable extension and spring pre-load.

**Wheels:** Gravity-molded aluminum-alloy front 3.5" and rear 6.00"

**Tires:** Tubeless, radial. Front: 120/70 x 17" - 120/65 x 17". Rear: 190/50 x 17" - 200/50 x 17" - 180/55 x 17"

**Brakes:** Brembo. Front: twin floating disk, 320mm diameter with 4-piston caliper. Rear: single disk, 240mm diameter with twin-piston caliper

**Dimensions:** Wheelbase 1419mm; seat height 780mm

**Dry weight:** 199 kg

conservative 150 mph. Keep in mind no rider, no wind, no resistance; this 154.8 mph is probably equal to 125 mph on the track.

The Benelli TNT delivered 106.76 horsepower in its performance mode. This bike offers dual mapping of its electronic ignition and fuel injection. With the touch of

wet weather just as a precaution if you could not control your wrist, as the throttle tends to be a bit touchy and just calls to be twisted hard. I experienced a torrential, late-afternoon downpour in Memorial Day traffic outside Boston (a hair-raising riding experience on any dry/clear



a button, one setting offers a performance mode while the other is for economy. Believe me, it is evident that economy is just that—ECONOMY—as the horsepower curve is clearly diminished by as much as 30 fewer horsepower as the computer mapping leans the bike's fuel deliver in this mode.

You may find this econo-setting useful to engage in

day) and felt that this setting offered an added level of assurance that wheel-spin would be tempered, if not eliminated entirely. Besides, the setting makes you very aware of just how fast this bike is under normal

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Pure, Italian sculpture . . . every inch of this machine is an artistic statement in integrated performance engineering.  
J. Rossi Photo courtesy VivaDUCATI.com

“performance” settings. I experimented with the on-off setting while under power, and in an instant the brute of the 1030 Benelli TNT is tamed into feeling like an ‘84 EX500 with a sock stuffed in the intake. That is



This magnificently over-sized concentric axle/ chain adjustment is so brilliantly bizarre yet functionally accurate compared to the tiny watch-like adjusters that most of us have tolerated for years. You have to wonder if adjustments change the ride height. From this vantage point, you can see how the dual steel frame tubes are received into the cast aluminum engine mount with recessed, gold anodized, triple square (XZN) socket bolts used in high torque applications.  
J. Rossi Photo courtesy VivaDUCATI.com

not a critical statement, just as close to the feeling as I can convey. Again, this is not a bad feature to have at your finger-tip. A little self control—either mechanical, electrical, or computerized—is very useful in the wet, or in just simple, cruise-the-slab, or on moderate speed (highly patrolled), populated roads. Why not? The bike is always beautiful looking with a somewhat dual personality of passive elegance or rip-roaring force, perhaps much like a tornado dancing across a landscape: a wonder to watch at any speed, and a force of nature to



The engine on the Tre is a beautifully crafted of a mill that is made by Benelli, not an import manufacturer. Dual radiators are side-mounted with thermostatically controlled fans that pull air through - and out. Oil-cooler is center mounted between the transformer like side panels.  
J. Rossi Photo courtesy VivaDUCATI.com

respect and know how to handle—always.

Of course, if you were looking for pure economical transport to pick up wine and a baguette or putt-putt around Martha’s Vineyard, a Vespa or Piaggio would serve you better. The Benelli, on the other hand, is



Instrumentation is a welcome combination of a sweeping hand-tachometer and temp gauge both - easy to read, with the all too common etch-a-sketch, grey-on-grey speedo, fuel capacity, trip-meter. The “Power Control” button is an on-the fly, econo, self imposed traction control. Go from exotic Italian performance to an the feel of an EX500 with a sock in the intake with a touch of a button. A little gimmicky at first but completely useful in heavy, consistently paced traffic and wet conditions.  
J. Rossi Photo courtesy VivaDUCATI.com

happiest as intended as high-performance urban art and a country-carver. So, I opted to run it through the paces in performance mode. The machine is fairly impressive stock. The stats from the Dyno prove that, and, on the road where I did most of my riding, the TNT is extremely capable and the power delivery is addicting.

Starting with the subtle nuances of starting this bike, you know it is a little different. Fuel injection means no more choke, cracking throttle, or turning on the gas. It is push-button easy, so long as you do it properly. When it cranks and does not fire the first time, stop. Wait. Key off. Repeat. It may take three times for the combustion chambers of the big, in-line triple to prime and jump to life. When it does, the revving sound resembles an Italian sports car. Steve has a performance pipe he showed me, but in the box it remains. (I bet it would sound awesome on this Benelli and if Rob dialed the bike in on the dyno. I’d say 118-120 hp is likely.) Non-economy mode, of course.

Funny thing about Italian design is that the ignition key is so beautiful and fits into its own little recessed setting so elegantly that, well, it really requires bare fingers to make it happen. In fact, a tall, manicured umbrella girl would be perfect, because a gloved hand is next to impossible to access the key and turn it. But, these are minor details and nuances of the machine whose total sum is simply outstanding. It forces you to appreciate the starting ritual that is uniquely Benelli.

Shifting on the 6-speed was positive, although neutral was often a little tricky to locate. Under power, the Benelli delivers low-down torque through a sweet spot between 3000 and 7000 rpm. Redline is 10,500, but the short shifts around 6,000 gave me the most fun just blasting from zero to way faster than legal limits in a blink of an eye. The standard riding position of the TNT felt all-day ready and willing to provide many G-forces of fun and torque while not compromising anything in the handling department. The seat may be a little lean, but sometimes style takes precedent. Besides, it is not the bike to plant yourself on and ride for 12 hours straight.

You could if you had to but, you’d have to get off and look at it every hour and, well, brag a little at the service station.

The rear shock is fully adjustable as are the forks, although I opted to ride the bike in its too-stiff stock setting. The 50mm Marzocchi forks made steering fairly lighter than expected and offered great handling without any shake or flex—even without a steering damper. Doesn’t need one. This bike is on-rails solid.

Now keep in mind the TNT is naked, so there’s no body to slip-stream behind or stabilize handling. The bike’s geometry, bridge-rigid frame, and suspension deliver all the necessary performance characteristics for

confident, spirited, and precision riding in a stylistic design package that is unmatched by many of the best attempted customs.

Braking, mostly front dual disks, for me felt as if it could use just a tad more grip compared to the acceleration capability of the machine. But maybe I am being too picky here. The dual-caliper Brembos are top-shelf components and are well matched for assertive street riding with some forgiveness as compared to the relentless stopping power of race-compound pads and cast-iron rotors I am used to on the Ducati.

The ergonomics of the Benelli TNT were unusually comfortable for me, especially being a compact 5’4” rider. As most new motorcycles are tall, the TNT’s seat height of approximately

32” felt considerably accommodating for me. I suspect that the ride height could also be adjusted as part of dialing in the suspension for individual rider sizes and preferences, making this bike viable for tall or compact riders.

My measure of riding comfort is rarely seat height to ground as much as it is seat height to pegs. And the distance was superb, along with the sculpted tank offering a slimmer feel and dimension than the actual elevation or plan view of the tank. These great scalloped-out sides of the tank were form-fitting to the rider’s knees. There are passenger pegs and a bi-posto seat arrangement,



but if I said that a 12-hour day in the saddle would be a stretch for the rider, it would be impossible and unlikely for the pillion passenger. Again, not a reason to buy a work of art, but at the same time this motorcycle is easily appreciated and enjoyed by two and quickly admired by more as it tends to draw a crowd.

I did not have the time to explore the inner workings and layout of this machine other than removing the seat to reveal an easily accessible battery and small, sealed tool area, suitable for credit card and cigarettes. Seriously, besides an air gauge, wallet, and a cell phone, it is best to leave everything else home. Besides having no place to stow it, you simply don't need it.

Red, green, and our test bike was an electrifying yellow.

This Benelli test has given me a whole new appreciation in variety being the spice of life and confirms that things can be much spicier if they are Italian.

Exquisite machine and explosive performance: the TNT.

Visit: Eastern Cycle Ducati in Beverley, Massachusetts, to see this exceptional, limited-availability motorcycle. Although, I cannot promise this yellow one will be there. Better call first.

Photo Credit: Ara Gechijian, Arlington, MA New England Photo

Post your comments on this article at VivaDUCATI.com Forum or contact John M. Rossi at: jrossi@VivaDUCATI.com

### Benelli History:

Benelli was founded in 1911 in Pesaro, Italy. It was started by Teresa Benelli, who invested all the family's money into the business in order to gain employment for her six sons. In the beginning, it was called "Benelli Garage," which repaired cars and motorcycles. They began manufacturing motorcycles in 1918, and, by 1920, Benelli built its first complete engine. In 1921, Benelli built its first motorcycle.

Benelli won Italian championship titles in 1927, 1928, 1930, and 1931. Before the start of WWII, Benelli was strong in manufacturing streetbikes. However, after the war, it moved towards small, two-stroke bikes.

In 1962, the "Motobi" factory was acquired by Benelli. In 1971, the Benelli factory was sold to Alesandro de Tomaso. Then, in 1989, the firm Giancarlo Selci took over the business. Again in 1996, the factory was sold, this time to Andrea Merloni. [Most recently, but perhaps not lastly, Benelli was acquired by Motor Group Qianjiang of Wenling, China; however, the Pesaro, Italy workforce is to remain intact. Ed.]



# PLASTIC WELDING 101

Terry Boling, Member #00297

Originally came up with the idea of writing about plastic repair for Desmo Leanings after I repaired a headlight fairing for my wife's GSXR. I contacted Jim and mentioned the article idea to him, and he promptly informed me I needed to use some Italian plastic for the photos. He may have been joking, but I'm not exactly sure. I contacted Joey Subrizi at Touring Sport in Greenville, South Carolina, and he said he had an Aprilia fairing that I could have for this article. Thanks, Joey!

The headlight fairing from the RSV-R had a few nice cracks in it at the mirror mounting point and a small chunk knocked off the tip. I figured most repairs are cracks and not missing chunks, so I decided to approach repairing the cracks for this article.

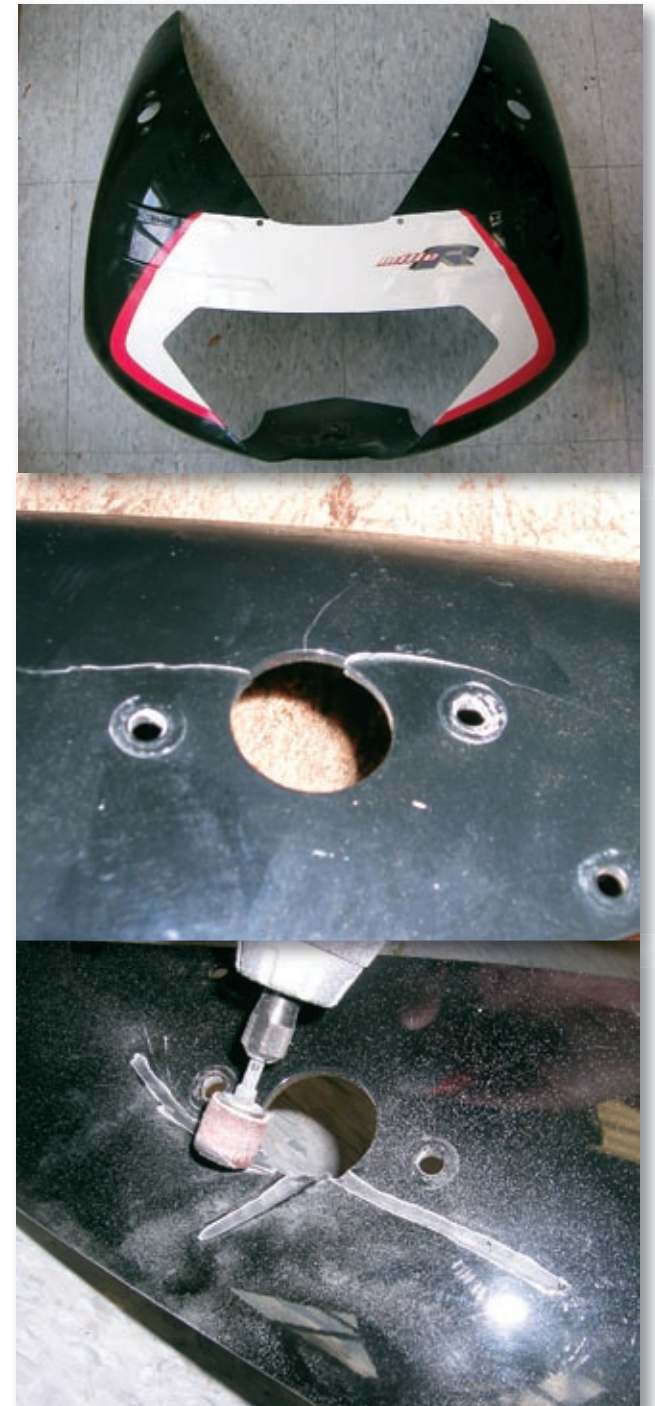
The first thing I did was use a Dremel with a sanding wheel and ran a V-notch down the center of each crack on the top side of the fairing. I tried to grind through at least half the thickness of the body panel. Three-quarters is probably a more preferred depth to get complete bonding of the two sides.

Most body panels are an ABS plastic, but you need to know what kind of plastic you are working with. Sometimes it is molded on the inside of the fairing, as was the case with the GSXR. Welding rods of different types of plastic are available in several locations such as eBay and Harbor Freight, but to guarantee compatibility, I prefer to use plastic from a donor body panel from the same make, model, and year bike. In the case of a rear tire hugger that I repaired, I trimmed strips off of the hugger in places that would not be seen once mounted on the bike. In the case of the Aprilia, I used what I had lying around for this article and used some metal shears to cut strips of plastic from a busted donor fairing.

Instead of buying some fancy plastic welder, I opted to do it the old-fashioned way—with an inexpensive "pencil" soldering iron. I got the iron pre-warmed, and then laid a strip of the plastic filler and started melting it into the "V" groove.

If you do not let the plastic get hot enough to fuse with all the parts that you are welding together, you'll get weld that does not have a good bond. This will be a weld that is together just well enough to hold the pieces together and make you "think" you have it welded. Once you apply a little bit of force to the two pieces, they'll snap right at the seam line. This is the same thing that will happen if you use two different types of plastic.

To try to prevent a bad weld, I left the soldering iron on the location long enough to build enough heat to where I couldn't leave my finger on the back side of the fairing. Also, when moving the soldering iron around the plastic, 1/8" or more would



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move with the iron. When you have the plastic this warm, all the parts will fuse together, and when it cools, usually at a fairly slow rate, you get a really good bond. You also can tweak the parts while the piece is still hot if there is a little bit of warping on one of them or the alignment is not perfect.

The next step is to get rid of the seam line on the inside of the fairing. If you leave this junction seam, it acts as a stress-riser and is a nice score line for fatigue cracking to occur. I ran a shallow notch over this seam and welded a bead of plastic in it. After getting all my welds the way I wanted them, I filed as much as I could with a file. After filing, I wet-sanded the welds with 220-grit sandpaper and then used 600-grit to clean them up.

At this stage, you should be able to readily inspect your weld. If you can see a thin line where the seam was, you probably have a bad weld and will have to reheat the area to get a good bond. If you don't see any lines or seams, it's probably a good weld. The exception to this is if you are using plastic welding rod and the colors are different. The seams will be more apparent.

I had a few, small dimples that were a little lower than the surface of the fairing. Since the welds looked good, I decided to use a good quality primer to fill the spots. I primed the area and wet-sanded with 600-grit after the primer dried. Sanding down to the plastic while leaving the primer in the low spots helps build those low areas. Alternating between priming and sanding, I got the panel nice and smooth with about five coats of primer. The last coat was lightly sanded, and the fairing was now ready for final painting.





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# Search For The First Bike

by Tony Calandro, Member #01150; photos by Jodi Calandro

## Sorry Mom:

Taxes. I had to pay my taxes, and I think that's how this mess got started.

It's been almost a year now since I started my first job and took my first car loan, signed a lease, and stopped eating peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. I graduated last summer, and now I'm teaching high-school English. I'm not sure at this point whether or not I know what I'm doing, but the kids don't seem know either, so thumbs up for another year.

Around mid-March people at work started talking about doing their taxes. "Oh crap" would be the cleaner version of what ran through my mind, and I did what any new graduate would do in such a spurious situation: I called Dad.

The real problem wasn't my taxes: a few phone calls and a trip to Best Buy for a copy of TurboTax fixed that. I still don't understand the tax terminology (not Termignoni), but I'm not convinced anyone else does either. The problem is that Dad is sneaky when he doesn't mean to be, and when he saw what I was getting in my refund he said, "You've got almost enough to buy a bike." Subtle, Dad, subtle!

Needless to say, it wasn't an idea that needed a whole lot of help. I was around seven when the cars started

moving into the driveway to make room for Dad's 851, and that's a first impression not soon forgotten. My search started humbly enough. I didn't have a lot of money or know-how at this point, but I had an idea of what I wanted. I called Dad again (dangerous trend), and the conversation went something like this:

Dad: "My friend has an '02 750 Monster he's trying to sell."  
Me: "What color?"

This is where I discovered you can't spell education without Ducati, and you can't look at a Ducati without an education.

Dad's suggestion of the 750 Monster didn't work out because within a week I had already decided I wanted something I could keep for a long time. This translates roughly to a Tim Allen grunt for more power. I started looking at 900cc Monsters, but I also mentioned to Dad that I really liked his 1995 900SS SP. Of the bikes I have ridden, that one was always a favorite, and I thought I could get a nice one with what I had. It didn't take him very long to bring my attention to a 900SS FE that was about \$2,500 over my initial \$4,000. That's when my budget began creeping north... quack? Hey, at least the jokes are still cheap! By April, my budget was \$6,000 with a loan from Dad, and the FE that started as out of my budget was now out of my reach (SOLD!).

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I hit the boards to try and get a picture of what was out there and how much things were going for and used the following boards: Ducati.ms, Speedzilla, Ducati Index, Cycle Trader, and of course the US DESMO website. By the time I was done, I was looking at over 10 boards, eBay, and craigslist (in 8 cities), and Dad was standing in



front of rallies asking people if they knew of any bikes. I didn't ask for that last part, but thanks, Dad.

By this point my search included the 749, 900SS SP/

FE, 916, 748, M900S, M1000Sie, S2R, and, for about 10 minutes, the SportClassic. I had also greatly increased my vocabulary to include previously nonsensical things like radial calipers, wave rotors, FCR 41s, carbon cans, clutch baskets, master cylinders, airboxes, slip-ons, rear-sets, clip-ons, bar-risers, hi-comp, bi-posto, desmodue, Computrack, Dyno Jet, fully-adjustable monoshock, and god knows what else. I wonder what my boss would say if "Desmosedici" showed up on a spelling test?

In the beginning, my goal was to get a bike by mid-June (when school lets out), so I could spend the summer, and what's left of my bank account, on the bike. As my online time increased and my search deepened, what started out as patience became somewhat less forgiving.

I got my first good lead on an '00 Monster 900S out in Tennessee in mid-May. The guy was asking \$4,000, and I decided to make the guy an offer, but somewhere between e-mails the bike was sold and my search continued.

I had been looking for over a month by then, and Dad suggested I leave it alone for awhile and come back later when the market changed. That was a great suggestion except that by this point I knew it would be faster and maybe less

dangerous to just keep swimming. By this point I was looking at eBay with earnest consideration, which I would have scoffed at only weeks before. My first couple days

of looking yielded nice bikes that would have required a Louis-and-Clark-style adventure and a significant donation to Exxon Valdez.

Frustrated, I narrowed my search to mid-90s SuperSports and, low and behold, found a 1995 900SS SP that looked amazing. I read the write-up, and it was exactly what I wanted, but, "I bet it's in SoCal," I said to myself. Turns out it was a 20-minute drive, so I called the guy and worked out a time to come see it.



bike than I really need, which was exactly what I wanted. I have only done about 200 miles so far, but I'm still smiling and trying to figure out how I can get another ride in with the school year wrapping up.



The bike turned out to be better than it seemed (a rare experience), and the guy, Dave, seemed to know what he was talking about. I didn't make an offer then because I needed to talk to Il Capo and tell him what I had seen. We talked it over and I started getting excited about the bike... so excited in fact that I bought the damn thing.

The bike runs great and looks great. It has some aftermarket pieces: Staintune exhaust, Dyno Jet stage 1, Corbin seat, bar risers, and a couple of other little things, but it's basically stock, which still makes it way more

I don't know exactly how my tax refund turned into a debt, but I'll finish by saying that I'm back to eating PB&J sandwiches and, of course, THANKS DAD!

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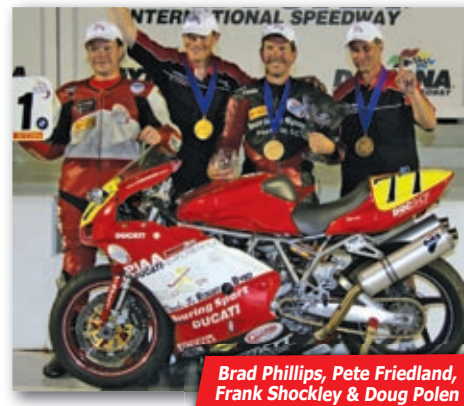


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Photos by Brian T. Nelson



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# Motorcycles of Charlotte Classic Bike Show

Chris D., Member #00997

I love motorcycles. I enjoy the quiet moments I spend in my garage, with the beverage of my choice in my hand, gazing upon my stable. My stable consists of a good mix of new, old, and unique. I love bikes so much that I had to go to work in the industry. My name is Chris D., member number 997, sales manager at Motorcycles of Charlotte, and I have an addiction: motorcycles.

Do you remember the first bike you ever saw? The bike that made you aware of these two-wheeled machines we all know and love? For me it was a 1982 Kawasaki KZ 440 my older brother purchased when I was just

a boy. This was the first bike I ever got a ride on. The bike I learned the harsh lesson about bare skin and hot exhaust. This was the first bike that made me aware of these machines. The first bike that made me aware of all the components that make up a bike: chassis, body work, brakes, suspension, motor, final drive... the parts that make up the sum of the machine and make it a fully functional bike.

Call it a personality quirk if you will, but I have always pondered the legacy of things. I always tend to wonder what events transpired to make what I'm looking at everything that it is. Technology and innovation are wonderful things, and if you study the motorcycle's heritage, going back to the first people who clipped a motor onto a bicycle, it helps you appreciate the modern machines we see in dealer showrooms.

On April 19, 2008, Motorcycles of Charlotte, the Queen City's very own European bike dealer, hosted our spring open house, an event designed to celebrate the return of beautiful, long days and the evolution of the motorcycle. Celebrating spring days is easy, but how can you celebrate the evolution of the bike? Well, the simple answer to that is to hold a Vintage Bike Concourse. There were about 15 entries, fine examples of classic Italian, German, English, and even Japanese machines. Seeing these bikes so close to their modern counterparts was almost like





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seeing great grandparents at your family reunion. The years can be seen but the family resemblance is certainly there.

The Concourse was open to public voting for best in show. There were many fine examples of the rugged and simple air-cooled BMW boxer twins from the early 1970s, a testament to the durability of the machines and to BMW for still offering parts support for models many decades out of production. There were bevel-drive Ducati singles and twins, as well as more modern belt-drive twins, including a fine example of an 851 Superbike. There were two-stroke Japanese twins and a four-stroke Japanese triple to be seen and heard. The most unique machine present was a Redneck Choppers custom Vincent Black Shadow. Not really the style that most of us Ducatisti appreciate, but the sound coming out of the 1951 Vincent twin found a special place in our hearts. ⚡



The MotoGP title won by Ducati hasn't gone unnoticed, even by those who don't understand a thing about motorcycling. And so, 34 years after the last victory by the Italian company in the world bike championships, Italian Post has decided to take the plunge.

On the 31st of May a stamp in honor of Casey Stoner's MotoGP title was printed, with the emblem of the Bolognan company appearing on the top right. The black and white background recalls the finishing flag that crowned Ducati MotoGP Champion for 2007



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# BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and "friction"

## GBD

by Todd Puckett, Member #00843

**M**y formal introduction to motorcycling was almost simultaneous with my formal introduction to employment. As a young man of sixteen, I was desperate to leave my hometown McDonald's behind and find something a little more profitable and in line with my abilities and desire to study engineering. Relief came in the form of my chemistry teacher who suggested that I try our hometown airport, where her own son had worked a few years before.

GBD is the identifier for the Great Bend Municipal Airport in Great Bend, Kansas. It is a massive WWII-era B-29 bomber training base turned small-town

upon my heart. As my parents were dead set against my having any form of two-wheeled transport, it was obvious that the neglected Suzuki 125cc two-stroke enduro would be my only elixir. We quickly struck a deal. I would take the bike, fix it up, ride it only at the airport, and give it back when I went to college. The bike's only problem was stated to be a gearcase oil leak. After tearing the engine down with some borrowed tools from the field's mechanic, I discovered that the only REAL problem was that he had been overfilling it. What a lesson in "Zen and the art" that was!

Over the next year and a half, Suzi and I were inseparable. I hadn't bothered to ask permission to use

*It became known to me that my brother's friend had a motorcycle that needed a little "fixing up."*

municipal airport. Its triangular layout consists of 8,000-foot legs, two of which still are runways, and the third is a dragstrip (site of the first NHRA Nationals, in fact.) Luck being what it is, on my way out of the tiny terminal after applying for the job, I ran into a family friend who worked the tiny car rental counter. With her good word, I was hired!

This was a small, hometown airport with maybe fifty general aviation aircraft of all sizes, Piper Cubs to turboprops. The occasional business jet caused quite a stir. My duties consisted of pumping gas, moving planes in and out of "T" hangars and the old, cavernous B-29 main hangar, routine maintenance of the fuel trucks, washing/waxing customer's planes and the boss's cars, and occasionally helping the aircraft mechanic turn wrenches. Keeping the terminal counter, hangars, and shop clean and sparkly were also included. Often times I was there alone. Then I met Suzi.

It became known to me that my brother's friend had a motorcycle that needed a little "fixing up." I had long dreamed of a bike to call my own. The slick magazine ads of the original Honda Interceptor in its seductive red, white, and blue livery had set moto-lust

the bike as part of my job, believing, even then, that it was easier to apologize. A stern "keep it slow!" was all the boss ever, and with regularity, had to say about it. I started sneaking away and hanging out off duty at the airport just to ride her or tend to her mechanical needs. Naturally, a seventeen-year-old kid with 8,000 feet of runway-smooth concrete and a motorcycle at his disposal is a volatile combination. The 125 was certainly no Interceptor, but with the short, rolling hills inside the triangle of runways, I had it all. Motocross trails, flat track, road course, and dragstrip were all mine! Nighttime was for chasing rabbits.

The lessons Suzi taught me will last a lifetime. Countersteering, brake balance, emergency avoidance, mechanics, don't drink and ride, and always wear your gear (learned those last two simultaneously!) are but a few that serve me well today. Looking back, that little job at that little airport and that little bike set the stage for my life. After the engineering degree, I began my career in the aircraft industry. My speed lust continues unabated, albeit aboard far more sophisticated machinery. Still, I often lay awake at night and long for one more day at GBD aboard Suzi... Suzi...Suzi.



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the borgo panigale tank



The Borgo Panigale district of Bologna is the location of the Ducati motorcycle factory. This tank flaunts its heritage but with a distinctly feminine twist. New to the Borgo Panigale line-up for 2008, it has a sleek and modern look with a bold tricolore at the sides and a white logo on the left chest. With adjustable straps and a comfortable ribbed waistband, it's sure to become a favorite. MSRP \$40.

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This image portrays a professional rider on a controlled racetrack. Never attempt any action that could be potentially hazardous to you or other road and track users.

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# 1098 S

engineered by the stopwatch  
designed by the racetrack



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Combining our most advanced World Superbike and MotoGP technologies, the 1098 Superbike family is the most powerful twin-cylinder ever, with the highest torque-to-weight ratio of any sport bike in the world. Borgo Panigale has produced the lightest, fastest stopping, quickest lap time Ducati Superbikes ever. The 1098 S, with Öhlins suspension and Marchesini wheels, is the reigning 2007 Superstock World Champion. See your local Ducati dealer for more details.

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